

what does it meme?

visual literacy programming in the library through the language of memes

Maggie Murphy, Jenny Dale, Brown Biggers

uplifting memes

Uplifting Memes is a year-long library outreach and instruction program themed around memes. Internet memes are phrases, images, animations, or videos that are copied, adapted, remixed, and shared, over social media and person-to-person. Memes have become almost ubiquitous on the internet and are part of everyday life for many college students.

While memes are typically associated with simple humor and informal social critique, they are also increasingly the subject of serious academic inquiry in media studies, political science, and linguistics, among many other fields. At the same time, while students are creating and sharing memes outside of the context of their coursework, little pedagogical emphasis has been placed on memes as new visual media forms with their own rhetorical frameworks. Thus, memes create a relevant lens through which students can engage with questions and dispositions for interacting with a visual information culture.

We developed this program as a **University Libraries Innovation and Program Enrichment Grant** proposal, which awards up to \$2500 to a support a project that "innovatively enhance[s] and expand[s] library services and programs," each year. Our proposal included plans for a series of interactive workshops and guest speakers, a student art contest and show, and a student-curated digital meme collection. The project was selected to receive the grant award for 2019-2020, and we have been able to develop a program curriculum that emphasizes **visual literacy**.

What's the Memeing in the Message?: Memes as Political Discourse, Activist Art, and Propaganda

Let's Get Ethical: Copyright, Fair Use, and Attribution for Memes

The Future is Weird: Artificial Intelligence's (Potential) Impact on Memes and Other Visual Media

Making Memes: Graphic Design, Visual Rhetoric, Digital Communication

Hamster Dance, Advice Dog, and a Couple of Frogs: A Brief History of Internet Culture

Visual literacy is a set of abilities, critical thinking strategies, and affective dispositions that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and other visual media. This includes:

Finding and accessing needed images and visual media effectively and efficiently

Designing and creating meaningful images and visual media

Interpreting and analyzing the meanings of images and visual media

Evaluating images and their sources

Understanding ethical, legal, social, and economic issues around the creation and use of images and visual media

Using images and visual media effectively and ethically

Adapted from the ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

Meme is the Theme: Student Art Contest & Show

Finding Meme-spiration with Public Domain and Creative Commons Media

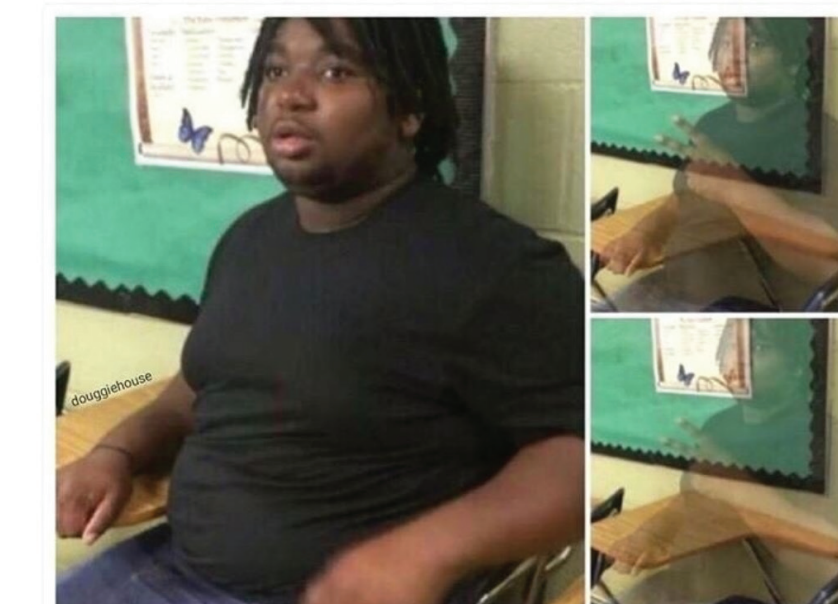
Nothing New Under the Sun: Art History on the Internet and IRL

Memes at the Museum: Slow-Looking and Visual Analysis for Memes and Contemporary Art

Memeories of Days Past at UNCG Homecoming

challenges

"Attendance isn't mandatory."
Me:



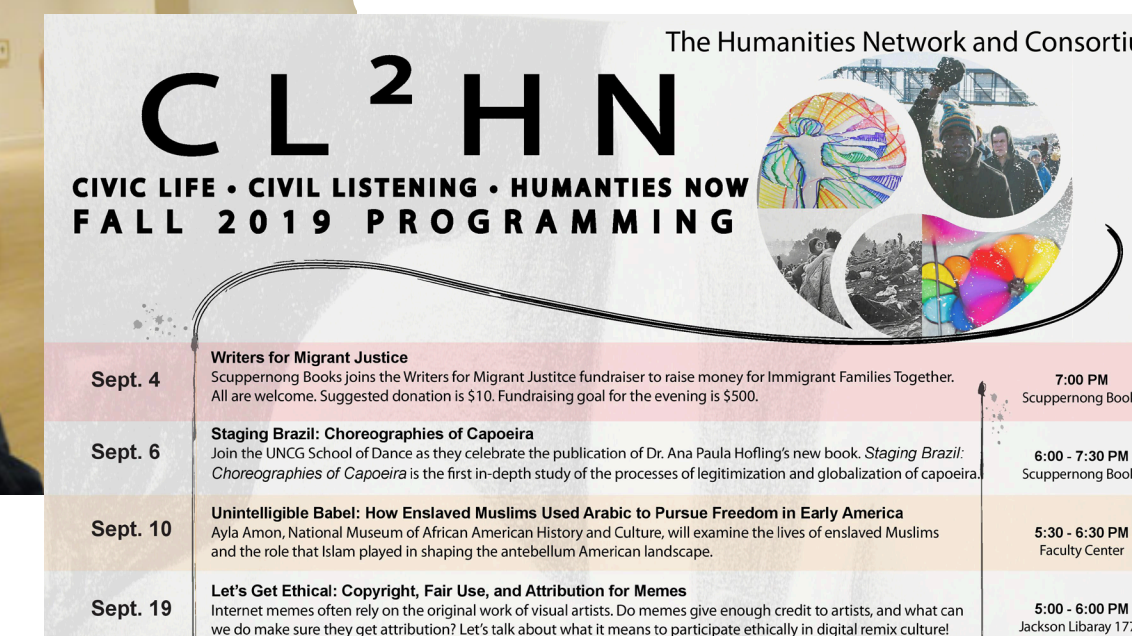
Meme used by student art and lit magazine, The Coradal, on their Facebook page

We have struggled with student attendance at our events thus far, despite advertising widely and receiving publicity from library and campus-wide communications. In the future, we will continue to reach out to teaching faculty, but also engage in direct outreach to student clubs and groups related to art, media, and pop culture.

collabs

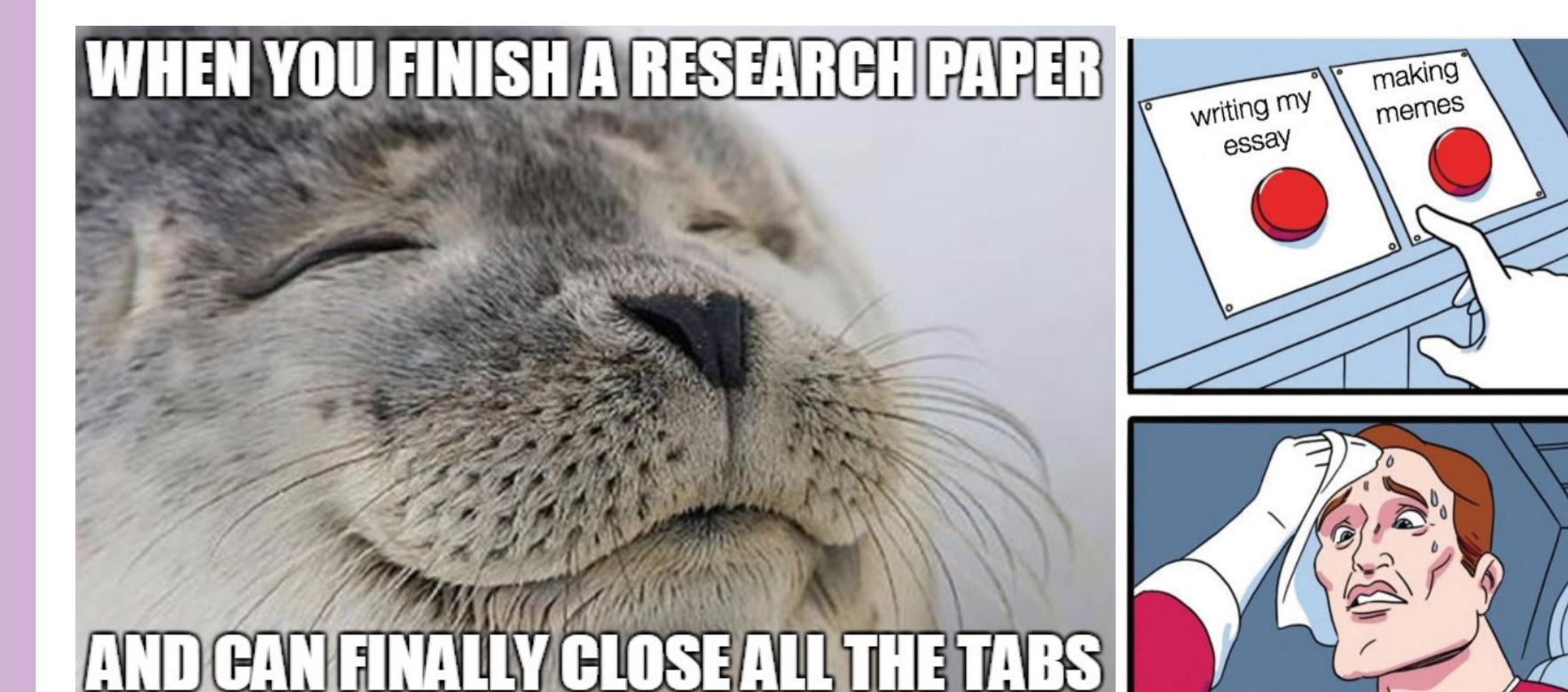


HNaC fall calendar featuring a meme workshop, demonstrating cross-promotion.

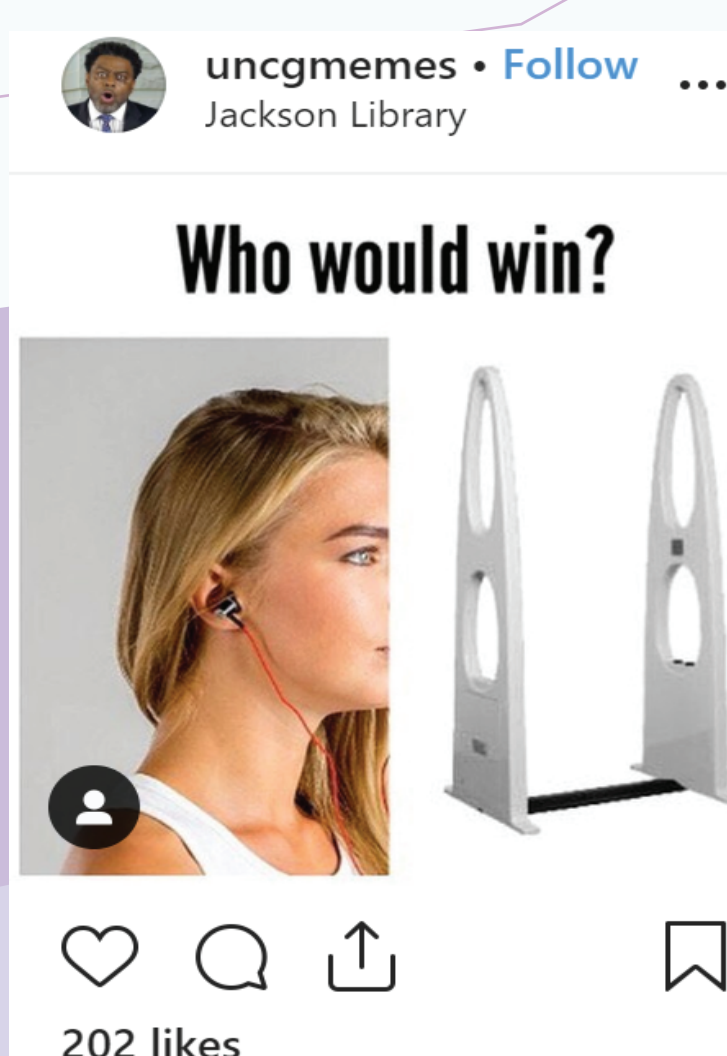


We are collaborating with campus partners such as the Weatherspoon Art Museum and HNaC (The Humanities Network and Consortium). Our spring art show will also be judged by library colleagues in Research, Outreach, and Instruction, Preservation Services, and Digital Projects.

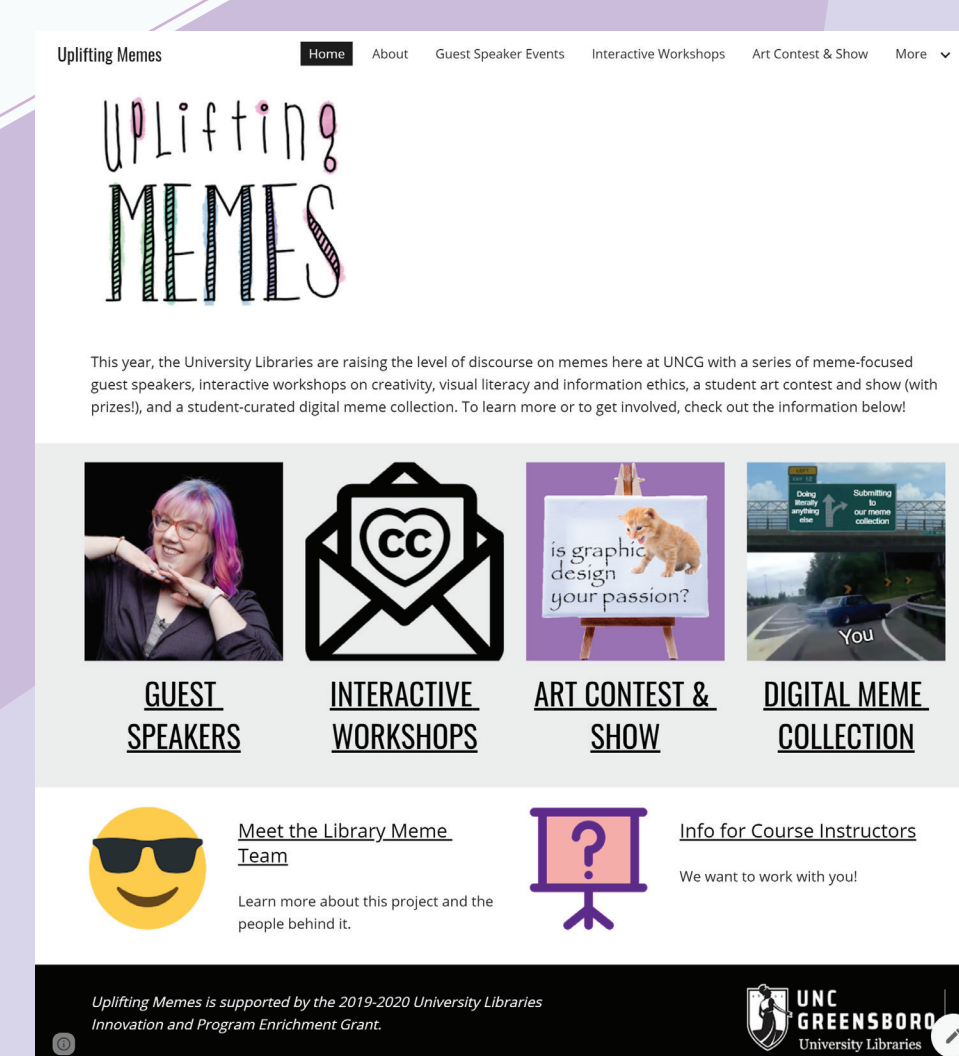
future directions



In addition to our planned spring events and projects, we are interested in developing a repository of meme-related assignments and activities contributed by faculty from across the curriculum at UNCG and beyond.



@uncgmemes Instagram



Screenshot of project website



Meme made with public domain painting



Marketing for one of our fall workshops on information ethics

LET'S GET ETHICAL: COPYRIGHT, FAIR USE, AND ATTRIBUTION FOR MEMES

Thursday, September 19

5 - 6 pm in Jackson Library Lab 177A (next to the Superlab)

Internet memes often rely on the original work of visual artists, such as photographers, animators, and cartoonists. How do the rights of those creators to control how their own intellectual property interact with the "fair use" doctrine of U.S. copyright law? Do memes give enough credit to artists, and what can we do to make sure their works are fairly attributed? Let's talk about what it means to participate ethically in digital remix culture!

Click here to find and RSVP (optional) to this event in Spartan Connect. For disability accommodations, please contact Maggie Murphy at mmurphy@uncg.edu.



Outreach to teaching faculty